

HRC NEWS & VIEWS

Volume 6 Issue 1
January 2010

2009 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED

Congratulations to Tracy Polage, HRC's 2009 Employee of the Year!



Tracy Polage, Youth Counselor
2009 Employee of the Year

Tracy is a Youth Counselor who joined HJCDP in June, 2006 transferring from the York Correctional Center. In addition to his skills as a Youth Counselor, Tracy has been a member of the Nebraska National Guard since April, 1994 and now carries the rank of Staff Sergeant. Tracy's military experience began with the Marine Corps in 1987. This award will be added to his 29 various military recognitions.

Heather Sidders, Tracy's Supervisor, shared the following comments, "Tracy has been with HJCDP for 3 years in his role as a YC making him the most senior YC on the HJCDP team. Tracy really stepped up to the plate this year with leading a group to look at radio usage and how to get the most out of how we use them. Tracy helped develop a policy and procedure for the use of the radios in HJCDP, inventoried all of them, and proposed a plan to Steering Team to ask to get new equipment for the radios to make them more efficient. Communication is key in the program, and Tracy's improvements with the radios has improved communication tremendously.

Tracy also volunteered to help with how we search for contraband. Tracy was on a team that looked at how contraband was being brought into the facility and has developed a process to help staff search and cut down on the amount of contraband that is brought in. Tracy continues to look for ways to keep the program free and clear of contraband.

Tracy also went, "Above and Beyond" his call of duty during our terrible winter storms by assisting stranded staff. Tracy volunteered to take staff home and also pick up staff so they were able to come in for their scheduled shifts. The prior shift was ecstatic that Tracy got the next shift here so they didn't have to stay, and staff that he picked up were happy to get to work so they didn't have to use unscheduled vacation time with the upcoming holidays around the corner. Tracy is always looking for ways to help the TEAM!

Tracy is an asset to the HJCDP team. Tracy is a role model and leader for the youth we serve. I appreciate his willingness to come up with new ways to improve the program and his dedication to the staff and youth of HJCDP. Thanks for all your hard work, Tracy."

For this recognition, Tracy received a framed certificate, \$30.00 Chamber Bucks, photo displayed in buildings 3 and 5 and a reserved parking space for the subsequent year. Great job, Tracy!

KUDOS TO

MHSS Is, MHSS IIs, Youth Counselors, Youth Security Supervisors who worked extra hours and made the extra effort to get to work during the recent snowstorms.

Food Service Director, Leaders, Cooks and Supply Worker who braved the weather to be here and prepare meals during the storms.

Maintenance Supervisors and Specialists for clearing the walks and parking lots during and after the storms.

All other staff who put forth an extra effort to make it to work supporting the operations.

Start of New Year by Scot Adams, Director,
Division of Behavioral Health



We're starting a new year, with its chance for a new beginning. I belong to the Oprah Winfrey mind set on this topic: Let's give a cheer to the New Year, because it's another chance for us to get it right, both at work and in our personal lives.

As we move into 2010, let's take the time to look at our talents, and how to use them in every way possible. It's important not to look for our flaws, but to always keep focused on our potential and especially on keeping a positive attitude.

The motivation to help people live better lives has to come from within each person. I believe that most Regional Center employees are motivated to provide the best services possible to consumers, and you are doing a wonderful job.

It's important for me to know what Regional Center employees like best about working to improve the lives of consumers, what they don't like....and more importantly, why. Feel free to send me an e-mail if you have suggestions on how to improve services, or on cost-cutting measures that can make a difference as we manage the finite Regional Center budget.

Happy New Year !!

"A dream doesn't become a reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work."

Colin Powell

Another Year

by Marj Colburn, Facility Operating Officer



In spite of rain, **snow**, sleet and hail we've made it through to another year! As in years past, there will be another flurry of activity as the Legislature convenes. With the special session held last fall to address budgetary concerns, it is certain that the budget will be a focus of the Legislature's activity in the regular session. At this point, we have not received any requests for information about the HJCDP program at HRC, but I am sure those requests will be coming. As the press begins to release information about proposed bills and potential budget-cutting solutions, we need to keep things in perspective and determine if what we are hearing is a proposal, an actual passed bill that we will have to implement, or a wild rumor.

During the course of this fiscal year, we have talked about the reduction in the HRC budget from last year's allocation. Staff have assisted tremendously in keeping costs down and keeping HRC operations in the black. We have been very conscientious about what we are spend-

ing, how we are spending it, deciding if we really need to spend it, and are we getting the best bang for our buck. It's really no different than what we all do every day in our personal lives managing our household budgets.

Having said that, HRC has also undertaken some significant projects costing money to improve services to the youth. The most notable is the conversion of the Chapel into a recreational area for the youth. This was accomplished by using HRC funds. In planning the project, a constant vigilance was maintained regarding the cost of what was being ordered for the project, and ordering in stages to be sure there was enough money to pay for what was needed. Jim and Gary did an excellent job in keeping the HJCDP Leadership Team informed of what they were finding for materials and prices. The safety of the youth in the new area was a primary concern regardless of the cost. Informed decisions were made and the project kept moving forward and came in under projected costs.

I am sure in the months ahead there will be many rumors that begin to circulate about the budget, cuts related to the budget, and what we can and can't afford as an organization. We are already hearing of salary freezes to minimize the need for layoffs. Just saying the word "layoffs" will cause a series of rumors. I challenge employees to bring rumors to the forefront and either have them confirmed as fact or have them dismissed as idle talk. I hope all staff are comfortable talking with their supervisor to address concerns. We cannot get the facts out to staff if we aren't aware of what you are hearing and what is being said.

Continually spinning rumors in the rumor mill creates chaos amongst ourselves and our peers. We are better than that. If what you are hearing is rumor, let's squash it, put it out of its misery and get on with taking care of business. If what you are hearing is fact, we will all be working together to develop a plan to address whatever we are directed to do. Don't pass "information" on unless you are sure it is fact.

We do a good job of taking care of the youth we serve. Let's do the same quality job in taking care of ourselves and our own wellbeing. Think, breathe and be rational about what you are hearing. Be a role model for your peers. HRC is at its best when all of us work together as a team. Let's continue to be supportive and honest with each other as we head off into 2010.

HRC EDITORIAL BOARD

Corinne Jensen, Editor – 3127 Marj Colburn, 3166
Sherry Block, 3260 Carolyn Brown, 3295
Cheri Delay, 3223 Linda Weber, 3255

It is the policy of the Editorial Board to attempt to print any article that does not attack another person. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit articles for size & content. **AA/EOE/ADA**



SUNDOG SEEN AT HRC

by Corinne Jensen

If you happened to look to the southeast on Thursday, January 7 at approximately 9:15am, you may have seen the Sundog, sometimes referred to as a mock sun. It is an atmospheric phenomenon that creates bright spots of light in the sky, often on a luminous ring or halo on either side of the sun.

Sundogs are formed by plate shaped hexagonal ice crystals in high and cold cirrus clouds or during very cold weather by ice crystals called diamond dust drifting in the air at low level.

Looking out the south door of Building 8, the Sundog shines bright!

CHAPEL WORK COMPLETED

The Chapel is back in full use! The floor surface has been prepared and will now provide an indoor area for recreational activities in addition to a place of worship.

The Maintenance crew did an outstanding job putting in new lights, window covers and installing a barrier net to protect the altar. The building shines with the cleaning and polishing performed by Housekeeping. All together, it's great, and it provides an indoor facility for the youth and clients in Bridges to enjoy.

Thanks for your patience in making this transition a reality!



Barrier net along south end.



Windows along east wall covered to protect stain glass.



Basketball goal mounted on North wall.



One of six T5 high base fluorescent fixtures installed.

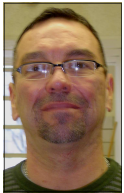
Floor tiles were removed to provide a smooth surface.

NEW EMPLOYEES JOIN HRC by Beth Bartell



Travis Harms began work with HJCDP in the first week of December. Travis is a MHSSII on the afternoon shift.

James Schulte joins the afternoon staff as a MHSS II. James returns to Nebraska after a stint with the U.S. Navy, where he was stationed in Florida. James enjoys golf and hanging out with friends.



Jordan Villicano also joins the afternoon staff as a MHSS II. Jordan has worked in special education and has experience as a juvenile hall counselor. He loves football, baseball, and basketball, and has a nickname of "California Husker". Jordan left the balmy climate of California for the invigorating blizzards of Nebraska in order to be closer to family.

FOR SALE

2 car seats, for children from 25 to 80 lbs, can be made into booster seats, good condition, \$25 each, call Sue at 751-2331.

Swimming pool, 4 feet deep and 12 feet across, with chemicals. \$35.00. Contact Danita 402-469-2247

IT'S A GIRL!

Aisling Eva was born on Friday 01/08/10 at 6:49 pm to Brian and Tiffany Crouse. She weighed 7lbs. and 13 oz, and was 21 inches long. Mom and daughter are doing well. Brian and Tiffany Crouse are enjoying getting to know this new person.

CONGRATULATIONS!

To **Tracy and Deana (LeFevre) Polage** who were united in marriage on January 8, 2010!

THANK YOU!

Imagine my surprise when I returned from Christmas vacation to find an envelope with a great pair of gloves in it! Thanks Santa, I needed that! Smiles, from Shelly C.

Say "Hello" to a Healthy 2010 With a Dose of H1N1 Flu Vaccine

By Dr. Joann Schaefer, Nebraska's Chief Medical Officer

Thinking about improving your health in 2010? Did you know flu vaccination is a great way to do that? Vaccination helps prevent disease and saves lives.

January 10-16 is National Influenza Vaccination Week, and H1N1 flu vaccine is now available to everyone. I encourage you and your family to get vaccinated.

We can't predict what the H1N1 virus is going to do next. But what we do know is getting vaccinated now will help stop the spread of the virus in the future.

H1N1 vaccine helps protect you. You aren't likely to get sick from the virus, and staying healthy means you won't infect your family members. What about them? They could get H1N1 flu from somewhere else. They may be at risk of complications. So shouldn't your family get vaccinated too?

H1N1 vaccine is safe and effective. The manufacturing process is the same tried and true process that's been used to make seasonal flu vaccine for decades. It's made in the same factories that produce seasonal flu vaccine and has been rigorously tested.

Vaccine is open to everyone, but people in the following high-risk groups also remain a priority: anyone 6 months-24 years old, pregnant women, people who live with or care for babies 6 months old and younger, health care and emergency medical services personnel and people 25-64 years old with underlying medical conditions like heart disease or asthma.

Remember, it's a myth that you can get the flu from the shot. The most common reaction is soreness and redness at the injection site. FluMist, the nasal spray, is a great alternative if you don't like needles, and it's available for healthy people 2-49 years old. It takes about two weeks before immunity is fully developed.

So step up and get vaccinated against H1N1 flu. You'll be reaping the benefits for months to come, and your body will thank you.

For more information about H1N1 flu, go to www.dhhs.ne.gov/h1n1flu.

KUDOS TO

Dr. Judson, Heather, Connie, Micki for getting the youth passes organized and updated before the storm.

Staff who assisted with out-of-school activities during the recent break.

Leave No Lint Behind!

By Jean Luther with excerpts from: Southern Power District Newsletter

Did you know unit inspections by the Environment of Care committee includes a check of the dryer filters to ensure that water can easily go through the screen? Or that the night shift has to use a brush and soapy water periodically to clean the dryer lint filters?

Lint buildup in a dryer could lead to hazardous conditions in your home. "Cleaning the lint filter after every cycle is one habit we want to encourage," recommends The Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM). They recommend that you clean the lint filter after each load and occasionally remove the filter and wash it with a nylon brush and hot, soapy water to remove residue. This simple chore not only improves air flow and energy efficiency, but also reduces the chance of a dryer fire. If you forget to clean the lint screen too many times you're going to get a buildup, and that's where ultimately you could have a problem, advises the Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

Manufacturers whose products carry the UL mark are required to ship dryers with safety instructions that specify cleaning the lint screen before or after each load. These instructions also recommend keeping dryer exhaust openings and adjacent surrounding areas free from accumulated lint, dust and dirt.

Without adequate air circulation, heat flow becomes stymied, clothes take longer to dry, and it costs more to operate the appliance.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As we said goodbye to 2009, we turned the page to start the new year 2010. The Editorial Board asked, "If you could have done something different in 2009, what would it have been?" Here is what we heard:

Jerry Dierfeldt: 2009 was such a perfect year, he can't think of a thing to change about it. He probably should not have eaten as many cream puffs throughout the year, but if he had it to do over, he would eat every last one of them again!!

Jean Luther: The dates of the snowstorm before Christmas to either way before Christmas or way after Christmas.

Mary Lou Haberman: Total withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan ASAP. Resources being used for that now could be better spent on improving the infrastructure of the U.S., schools, and health care system. We can't do it all.

Corinne Jensen: Spent more time with my brother.

HAPPY NEW YEAR CONTINUED:

Cheri Delay: I would not have worried so much about things I have no control over.

Mary Lou Haberman: Nationwide approval and support of gay marriages.

Mary Lou Haberman: Remembering that MOST of the time, it is the woman who delivers the baby, not the health care worker. That is why it is called LABOR.

Ruth Jeremias: Not have to have all the budget cuts we have had to make.

Pam Schwabauer: Reverse the economic recession that hit our country in 2009.

LaDonna Halbmaier: My husband would not have lost his job that he had had for twenty-three years.

Susan Kotas: Bring back all the soldiers who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan to their loved ones.

Marj Colburn: The Christmas snowstorm so families could have gotten together.

Marv Colburn: The December weather.

Carolyn Brown: I would exercise better. Plan to improve that in 2010.

Pat Adrian: Would not have her children move so far away from home.

Beth Bartell: When I joined the Hamilton County Band in 2009, I continued to play the flute. I wish I had learned a new instrument – the clarinet.

Joann Stromer: Less snow storms!

Linda Heinis: Take more trips to Denver to see son and family before they left for England for 3 years

Susan Callan: Move our troops out of Iraq

Carolyn Johnson: That the President doesn't get blamed for everything.

Jane Wells: Improve the economy.

Marsha Utecht: War over.

Doug Bonham: War over and no starving children.

Dianne Powell: Less political agendas.

Sherry Block: Economy better and everyone who wants a job could have a job.

Continued on page 6

HAPPY NEW YEAR: *Continued from page 5*

Peg Weseman: More \$\$, less snow!

Lynne Coates: Solve health insurance issue so it is good for everyone.

Kay Evans: Not to have bailed out banks and automobile companies; instead help small businesses.

Suzi Newsome: Stockmarket.

Linda Weber: Time flies! To take more time to spend with family and friends.

Sandra Warford: Change the weather.

The Editorial Board thanks you for sharing your thoughts!

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECTS by Sherry Block

Last spring, youth in the Prevocational Center planted seeds in their garden. Little did they know what would grow from those seeds. They enjoyed the first cucumbers and jalapenos in July. They made salsa (very hot, of course), and were pleased to be able to share it with their peers on the units. The garden produced well so the youth sought approval to sell the excess. Sales picked up when the tomatoes, zucchini, onions, bell peppers, potatoes, and yellow squash were ready.

As often happens, the zucchini were plentiful so the boys made some zucchini bread. That was well received and before long, requests were coming in for other varieties - pumpkin, cinnamon applesauce, oatmeal, eggnog, cranberry orange, and banana nut. The aroma of fresh baked bread wafting down the hall became a regular happening. With the leadership of the Activities Staff, Linda Heinis, Joann Stromer and Steve Breault, the youth still cleaned the dining rooms, moved laundry carts, and made weekly trips to the recycling center.

Youth learned about pulling weeds and processing pumpkin, about doubling and tripling recipes, measuring dry and liquid ingredients, breaking eggs and calculating costs, successes and failures. They practiced their sales pitches and made signs. When they tallied the numbers at the end of the year, they had sold 267 small loaves and 232 large loaves of bread.

Income and expenses for the PVC entrepreneurial projects are managed through 6823 (Patient Activities Fund.) The total income was \$1136.35. After purchases of bread pans, a mixer, measuring cups, ingredients and other supplies, their net profit was \$467.15. The youth have recently started taking their wares to the Hastings DHHS office on Thursdays. We appreciate our staff's support of the PVC youth. Amazing things happen when you plant a few seeds.

Retirement Estimator by Carolyn Brown

Are you thinking about and/or setting goals for retirement? There is a link on Social Security's web site that is very helpful and interesting. You may want to check this out at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator/>.

This Estimator produces estimates that are based on your actual Social Security earnings record. Retirement estimates are just that, estimates. They will vary slightly from the actual benefit you may receive in the future because:

- Your Social Security earnings record is constantly being updated.
- The Social Security calculators use different parameters and assumptions.
- Your actual future benefit will be adjusted for inflation.

Check this out. I think you will find this very helpful for your future planning.

If you have any questions regarding your State Retirement, you may call them directly at 402-471-2053 or 1-800-245-5712. Their office is located at 1221 N. Street, Suite 325, Lincoln, NE 68509. Their email is: www.npers.ne.gov.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS . . .



The Employee Appreciation Committee will be having an Employee Appreciation Tea. It will be located in the west Cafeteria in Building 3, between 9:30 am – 11:00 am & 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm. Refreshments will be provided for all staff. Stop in!

GOAL FOR NEW YEAR? By Corinne Jensen

Did you make a goal to be healthy in 2010? Want to shed those excess pounds? Lower your blood pressure? Well, HRC can help you out!

You can find two weight scales, various brochures on health topics and an electronic blood pressure cuff in the Wellness Room located on the Staff Development wing in Room 241 A, 2nd Floor in Building 3. Entrance to this area is accessible with an employee ID badge from 8:00am to 4:30pm. All employees also have access to the weight room located on the Ground Floor of Building 3 when youth are not present. Guidelines for the use of this room can be found in the HRC policy, "Employee Use of Exercise-Weight Room" located on any computer desktop through the HRC Policies beach ball icon. All State employees have the opportunity to join the Live Healthy Nebraska 100 Day Challenge (began January 14 through April 23). Information is available at the website www.LiveHealthyNebraska.org. Make this the year that is a better year for you!

A BLAST FROM THE PAST by Corinne Jensen

The following were recipes shared by Nutrition Services at the Chili Cook-Off. The dates on the recipes are February, 1956. At that time the facility was known as Hastings State Hospital.

Golden Glow Salad (serves 1800)

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 100 pounds | Lemon Jell-O or |
| 12 pounds | Plain gelatin |
| 105 pounds | Carrots, chopped fine |
| 3 cases | Pineapple, crushed |
| 2 gallon | Vinegar |
| | Salt to taste |

1. Dissolve Jell-O in 20 gallon boiling water.
2. Add cold water to make 50 gallon.
3. Add carrots and pineapple.

Baked Carrot Loaf (serves 2000)

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------|
| 260 pounds | Carrots, cooked and diced |
| 6 ½ cases | Peas |
| 5 gallons | Onion, chopped finely |
| 16 pounds | Shortening, melted |
| 85 dozen | Eggs, beaten |
| 30 gallon | Bread crumbs |
| 30 gallon | Milk |
| | Salt and pepper to taste |

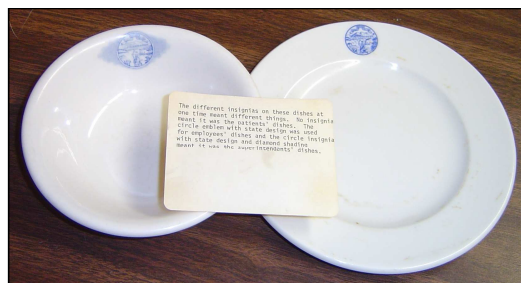
1. Combine all ingredients in order given. Pour into a well-greased pan.
2. Bake 50 to 60 minutes in a moderate oven or until a knife in center comes out clean. To serve, cut in squares. This may be served with cheese sauce, white or egg sauce.

THE PERFECT SPINACH DIP from the kitchen of Corinne Jensen

- 1 envelope Lipton Secret Recipe Vegetable Soup Mix
- 1 container sour cream, 8 oz.
- 1 cup Hellman's mayonnaise (not Miracle Whip)
- 1 pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 can water chestnuts, drained and chopped

In medium bowl, combine all ingredients and stir well. Chill for at least two hours before serving.

Great with vegetables and crackers.



The different inscriptions on these dishes at one time meant different things. No insignia meant it was the patients dishes. The circle emblem with state design (right dish) was used for employees' dishes and the circle insignia with state design and diamond shading (left dish) meant it was the superintendent's dishes.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES by Sherry Block

The youth were out of school for two weeks over the holidays. Coaches, Youth Counselors and a score of volunteers provided special activities during this time. They made candy, beef jerky, cupcakes, and snack mix for the Holiday Bowl game. They heard about go karts that reach speeds of 120 mph, took van rides and had their pictures taken with antique cars at Jackson's Car Corner. They gave the new Wii games a work out, had a bowling tournament, went swimming at the YMCA, learned how to make rolls, and did some sledding. They participated in the chili cook off and were not swayed in their voting by all the politicking cooks.

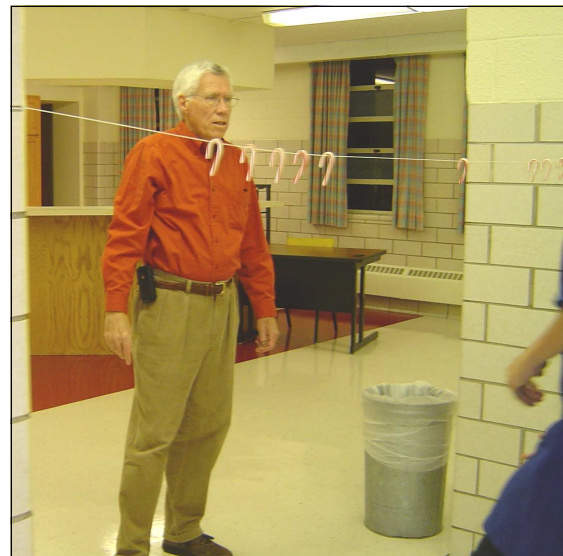
There were many staff involved in these special activities and each one deserves our thanks. Corinne, Marj, Jean, Dave, Kelsey, Kelly, Beth, Ruth and all the chili makers put in extra time. Lisa and the Nutrition Services staff filled lots of orders and collaborated on special meals. It takes our whole team to help the youth through these days here when they would much rather be home with their families. THANK YOU.



2009 HOLIDAY ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS



Sgt. Jason Douglas (back) and Pvt. Justin Weaver from the National Guard conducted a fitness competition for the youth.



Dr. Wayne Ganow directs traffic during the Youth Fellowship candy cane relay. Youth Fellowship volunteers also sponsored a Santa Suit contest.



Ken Brown, Manager of Motorsport Park Hastings, talked about horsepower and suspension of high tech go karts.



K-9 and Friends members Joni Pankoke, Jamee Bockerman, Denise Ferguson, and Vicki Sinner (not pictured) talked about their rescued dogs and the responsibilities involved with owning pets. There were lots of smiles and wagging tails during this activity!



Corinne, Dave & Jean served breakfast. Nutrition Services staff made a special quiche. PVC youth baked breads.

Youth enjoyed decorating cookies.



Jean and Kelly prepare the beads.

MEMORIES OF 2009 CHILI COOK-OFF!



Marsha, Doug and Lisa prepared a batch of **Blast from the Past Chili**. Also on display were old recipes and photos from the past. Doug helped serve.



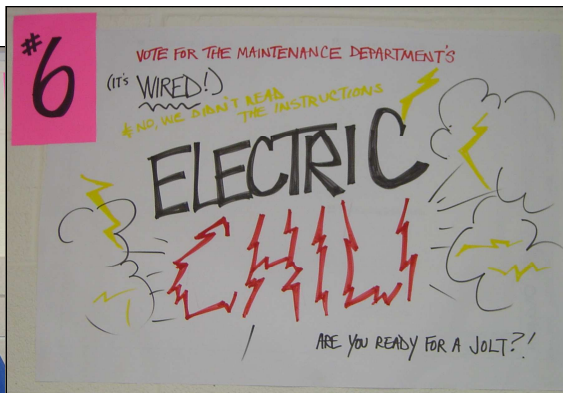
Marj served her **Reindeer Got Run Over by Grandma Chili**.



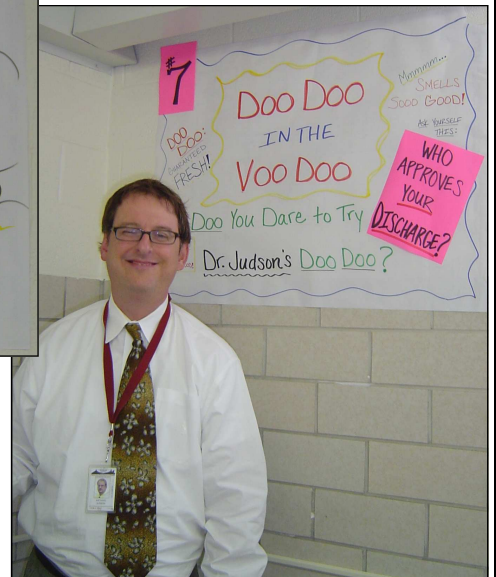
Trash Can Chill-E prepared by Heather Sidders and the Youth Counselors won the Biggest Loser or "Fiber Up America" and Bring the Heat awards.



Kelly put together **Medical Miracle Chili** for all to enjoy.



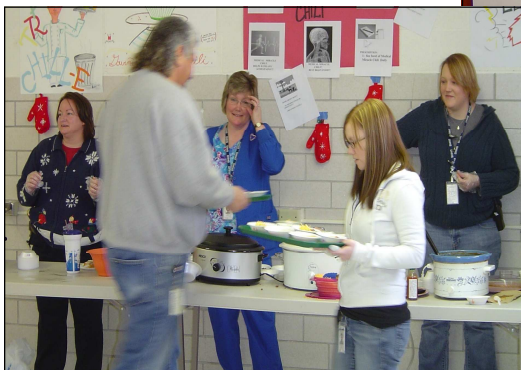
Jim Schuyler's **Electric Chili** gave a jolt!



Dr. Judson shared his **Doo Doo in the Voo Doo Chili** and captured the Best Dressed and Best of Show awards.



Linda Heinis and members of the PVC put together a pot of **Spicy Arou Chili**.



Steve and Tiffany get their samples to try.



Rolls made by Marj and Nutrition Services staff were served to all by Marsha.